

Language skills for successful subject learning

CEFR linked descriptors for mathematics and history/civics

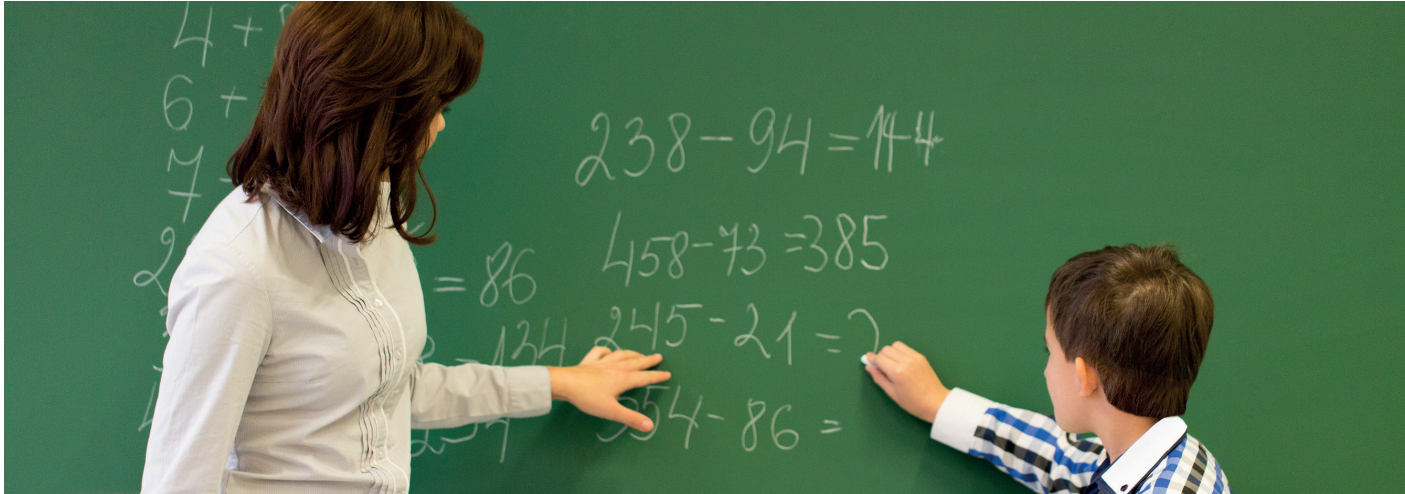




Photo: shutterstock

These resources highlight challenges for young learners in subject classes where the language of instruction is not their first language. The focus is on minimum language standards in history/civics and mathematics for learners aged 12/13 and 15/16. The language descriptors are linked to CEFR levels A2, B1 and B2 and available in six languages.

Resources

-  A publication containing the full study on language descriptors for subject learning
-  A website including:
 - key information on required language levels in subject classrooms
 - language descriptors in 6 languages (English, French, Finnish, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Portuguese)
 - a short guide for developing similar CEFR-related language descriptors for other subjects

EN FR

The resources are for

- policy makers
- headteachers
- teacher educators
- teachers

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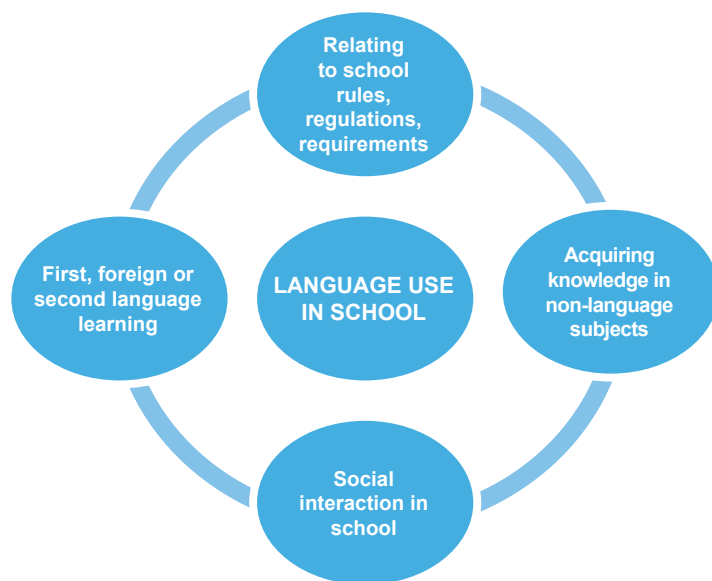
This publication will clearly help reinforce our understanding of language education across all subjects.

Paula Mattila - ECML Governing Board member for Finland

www.ecml.at/languagedescriptors

Take a closer look

The traditional view is that language is only important in language lessons. Today however, language is no longer seen as a goal in itself, but also as a tool through which students interact with friends and peers in schools, and through which they learn content matters in subjects like science, geography, history and mathematics.



Research findings

The research conducted in developing the publication indicates that:

- students at the age of 12/13 are required to have a minimum level of language competence mirroring B1 in all skills in order to succeed in history/mathematics.
- 15/16-year-old students need a B2 competence in the same skills/subjects.

Example of self-assessment form

Self-assessment helps learners take ownership of their learning. Language descriptors can be used to encourage students to set goals and make them aware of what they need to be able to do in the history/civics or mathematics classroom.

The teacher and the students can discuss which skills it makes sense to focus on, and the teacher can provide them with relevant language descriptors related to the CEFR levels.

Student Age: 15/16 Subject: History

My goals for speaking

My objectives: • What I can do • What I will work on	I cannot manage this yet	I can do this...			I have evidence
		with help from classmates or teachers	well	very well	
	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date

Express opinions, discuss

B2: I can talk about historical topics and share information, ideas and my attitudes about the topic					
B2: I can give my opinion and explain it					
B2: I can explain why I am for or against something					

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